

NEBRASKA STATE FIRE MARSHAL OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION



Interpretation Number: 03-07

Date: 1 February 2007

Pamphlet Number: NFPA 13, 2002 ed.

Section(s): 4.1, 4.2, 8.1, A8.1

Comments:

This interpretation does not apply to Health Care Occupancies or when the Life Safety Code mandates sprinkler protection *throughout* a building.

Question: Under what conditions are partial fire sprinkler systems permitted to be installed?

Response: Where a fire sprinkler system is installed to provide building protection, it shall include all portions of the building unless otherwise permitted by code or as specified below.

Sprinkler system installation shall meet the design requirements of NFPA 13, 13R, 13D, or as specified by the Life Safety Code. These documents list certain areas where sprinkler heads may be omitted.

Other codes permit sprinklers in specific areas without total building protection. Examples include but are not limited to paint booths (NFPA 33), buildings under construction (NFPA 241) and individual hazard area protection (Life Safety Code).

Except as noted for specific areas noted above, a partial fire sprinkler system is permitted when a two-hour fire rated barrier is placed between areas that are sprinkler protected and those that are not. Examples include, but are not limited to an addition to a building where the new addition is sprinkler protected but the existing building is not, and the retrofit of sprinklers to one or more floors of a multistory building. In effect, the two hour fire rated separation creates two separate buildings; one that is sprinkler protected, and one that is not. In all cases the authority having jurisdiction must approve any partial fire sprinkler system prior to installation.

The success of a fire sprinkler system depends on the size of the fire when the first few sprinklers activate. If the fire grows to a large size before fire sprinklers operate, the likelihood of successful fire sprinkler system performance is significantly reduced.

Signature: 

Date: 02/01/07

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